

# BACK TO **SCHOOL**

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for the  
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**HEALTH**

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# Getting back into the swing of things

**The month of September means a change of routine and considerable expense for families with children aged 3 to 17**

**:: CARMEN ALCARAZ**

**MALAGA.** When September arrives we say goodbye to the suffocating heat of the summer, the days start to get shorter and the children go back to school after the long holiday, some more willingly than others.

This term, a total of 1,423,265 pupils will attend 4,575 State schools in Andalucía, which is about 78 per cent of the total number of children of school age. The others will either attend a semi-private 'concertado' school (18.2 per cent), or a private one (3.8 per cent).

This is the month when parents have to buy text books, school materials and uniforms ready for the new school year, as well as prepare their children mentally for the return to school and the change in routine, which often involves considerable effort for parents and pupils alike.

With regard to the cost of going back to school, the OCU consumers association says that families spend around 1,200 euros on average for each child aged between three and 17. This figure will differ for those attending private schools because the fees also have to be paid in those cases, and these vary from one to another.

Apart from the type of school, the cost also varies depending on the age of the child. Parents of primary school pupils normally have to pay the most, with an average of nearly 1,400 euros. The largest amount is spent on the text books which have to be bought at the start of each new school year.

To help parents who are faced



The largest amount of money spent buying the materials for school is on the text books. **:: SUR**

with considerable expense at this time of year, the OCU recommends planning in advance, buying what is needed in stages and comparing prices and quality for the best deal.

The best way to do this is to start by making a list of what has to be bought and what can be used again from the previous year. Children don't need to have everything new at the beginning of term, so backpacks, pencil cases, notebooks and folders can probably all be re-used.

One way of making the necessary purchases, which has become more popular in recent years, is e-shopping, or buying online, because it is a way of saving time and money. Unsurprisingly, nearly 50 per cent of families buy school uni-

forms, text books, backpacks, pencil cases, labels and other products in this way.

Some of the advantages of this type of shopping is that prices can be compared quickly and easily. Discounts are also often available and, of course, the goods are delivered to your home, which not only cuts down on effort but also means you don't have to shop so far in advance, as delivery times are normally pretty short these days.

To save on transport costs, many parents decide to do the 'milk run', taking it in turns to drive several pupils who live in the same area to school, or picking them up when classes finish for the day. This not only saves money, but is also more

environmentally friendly because it means fewer vehicles are on the roads.

## The return to routine

Apart from the financial aspect, the return to school involves a great deal of effort by the children and the rest of the family to return to normal routine.

As a general rule, people tend to feel somewhat sad and lethargic when they come back from holiday. This affects adults as well as youngsters, because our bodies are exposed to a change of schedule and activities, and we have obligations which may not always be very popular.

In the most extreme cases, this

can manifest itself in children in the form of stomach ache, headaches or even insomnia. However, experts say there is no cause for alarm because, although children are especially sensitive to changes, they also adapt much more easily to new situations.

To help them through this stage, psychologists recommend that parents stress the positive aspects of going back to school, such as seeing their friends again, or being able to take part in interesting activities. They also say that children should be helped to adapt to the new school hours by changing their bedtime and the time they get up progressively a week or two before the new term starts, so they don't feel too tired during the first few days.

Also, of course, it is essential to encourage healthy lifestyle and eating habits. For instance, it is important for children to start the day with a good breakfast, together with the rest of the family if possible. Parents should also give thought to the type of snack their children will be taking to school for playtime. Nutritionists recommend a ham or turkey breast sandwich, but not one made with sliced bread because it contains too much fat and sugar. The sandwich can be accompanied by a yoghurt or a piece of fruit, if required.

When children eat school lunches, it is important to bear the menu in mind to make sure that their evening meal doesn't duplicate it. That way, parents can ensure that they obtain the correct nutrients for healthy growth.

It is also important for parents to set an example for their children. Youngsters mainly learn from role models, so if their parents show that they are adapting quickly and positively to the changes to their everyday lives which come as a result of the return to school, they too will find it much easier to cope with.

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# Brand new term, same old problem

## Seven important steps to take to remove headlice from a child's hair and stop them spreading

:: LINDA ONTIVEROS

**MALAGA.** Just like viruses and antibiotics, the incorrect use of a remedy can cause major resistance in the problem we are trying to eradicate. After children go back to school, parents start to dread the arrival of the note to inform them of an outbreak of the dreaded "nits" and head to the supermarket or pharmacy for the special shampoo and comb.

Nowadays, according to dermatologist Dr Ana Álvarez-Viéitez, it seems that headlice have become more resistant because people aren't using the shampoos and lotions properly, and they are therefore more difficult to get rid of.

"Only one in ten people who have headlice go to a dermatologist for treatment," she said, and that makes the problem difficult to treat properly. Dr Álvarez offers the following steps to deal with the nit problem:

- 1. Apply a lotion specifically designed to combat headlice onto the child's scalp, preferably when their hair is dry.

- 2. Leave the lotion for the recommended time, which is normally



Patience is needed to get rid of the lice completely. :: EFE

between 15 and 30 minutes, and keep the scalp covered with a plastic cap during that time.

- 3. Wash the child's hair with a pediculicide (anti-lice) shampoo, and leave it to work for a few minutes.

- 4. Pass the special comb through the hair to catch any lice and check each strand of hair for more.

"This is very important, although it needs patience because you have to check every hair and remove the nits with tweezers or using your

nails," said Dr Álvarez-Viéitez. "I must stress this point: the final step is the most important one of all, because otherwise we will have irritated the child's scalp unnecessarily; if the nits have not all been removed, new ones will hatch within

days."

- 5. Wash the objects that have been in contact with the patient's hair at 60C, or put them in a sealed bag for a week so the lice die from starvation. Then, use the vacuum cleaner on the items and throw the used bag away.

- 6. One week after the treatment, check to make sure no headlice or nits have survived.

- 7. People who are regularly in contact with the child should also be checked. "If you don't do that, all your effort and patience will have been for nothing: within a few minutes they will have headlice again," said the doctor.

Following these seven steps will stop the infection spreading. It will also help to put an end to some myths, such as that cutting the hair reduces the possibility of catching headlice (unless the head is shaved completely); that vinegar kills them, when in fact all it does is detach them; or that the lice jump from one head to another: they are passed when hair comes into contact with that of others, or through infected utensils.

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# WhatsApp groups for parents - a useful tool, but tread carefully

It is advisable to lay down certain rules to make sure such groups are used properly and are helpful

WhatsApp groups for parents are useful for passing on information and answering queries but they can also spread fake news and rumours

:: SOLANGE VÁZQUEZ

The new school year is about to begin, with all that that entails. As a result the WhatsApp groups for parents, which have hardly been used during the summer holidays, are coming into their own again.

These groups are very useful for passing on information, answering questions and sorting out minor problems, but they can also be a bit of a double-edged sword as many people don't use them for the purpose for which they are intended.

Setting down some simple rules may help, and many such groups now create a 'statute' to stipulate what is and what is not permissible. The following guidelines

will help to make sure that a WhatsApp group for parents of schoolchildren operates well.

1. Don't overcrowd the group. This is the principal rule. It is important that the members (school groups normally have about 50) are not overwhelmed by questions. For example, if someone posts "Has anyone seen my daughter's pencil case?" 49 people may respond with comments such as "I haven't," "I'll look later," and "Not me". It is better if the only people who reply are those who have useful information.

2. Don't allow virtual lynching. In some cases, WhatsApp parent groups have been used to criticise teachers or the heads of schools. This could be considered an offence. Also, the information tends to be twisted and can result in misunderstandings, problems and, in general, an unpleasant atmosphere, something which is never desirable.



WhatsApp groups are useful for passing on information. :: SUR

3. If there are problems between two people, they should discuss them face-to-face. In many groups people become involved in long-winded discussions about matters unrelated to the school or the pupils, and sometimes these can end in monumental arguments. Don't forget that the rest of the group can follow what is going on. Some join in, and make things worse. If two parents have a grievance, the group is not the place to deal with it. Do it face to face, or at least privately. It is not of interest to anyone else.

4. Always ask someone if they would like to be added to the group, don't just do it. It is not obligatory to become a member and many people prefer not to, even though it means they will not be able to take advantage of the benefits. An increasing number of people are not interested in this type of communication.

5. Be careful how you write. It can sometimes be difficult to make yourself clear in this 

## SCHELLHAMMER BUSINESS SCHOOL UNVEILS IMPRESSIVE NEW CAMPUS WITH 18-HOLE GOLF COURSE

MARBELLA

Schellhammer Business School, the first English-speaking business school in southern Spain, has announced the opening of their new campus at the 60-hectare private estate of Valle Romano Golf & Resort in Estepona.

The new campus offers students 4-star quality accommodation, 3 outdoor swimming pools, a gym, paddle tennis courts, restaurant, snack bar, meditation room and even an 18-hole golf course.

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growth, understanding human nature as well as practical ones that allow students to visit companies for a real look behind the scenes of today's business world.

Students from over 43 different nationalities have had the privilege to study at Schellhammer Business School during the past 9 years and the new campus

comes just in time for the 2017-2018 academic year that is surpassing all previous records with applications at an all-time high.

All graduates to date, have pursued careers around the globe, from London to New York, and Munich to Zürich, or continued with higher education, mainly at European and US-based insti-

tutions, or returned to their home countries to join their family business, while a significant number even embarked upon the adventure of entrepreneurship with their own business startups - ranging from hospitality to recycling and fashion to publishing.

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> type of communication and there can be misunderstandings about meanings or tone of voice. Try not to be ambiguous, always sound pleasant and use emojis sensibly to support your message.

6. There is no place for sarcasm. In real life there are plenty of people who don't understand it and on WhatsApp, between people who don't know each other, even more so. Avoid sarcasm altogether, in case it causes problems. It is best to keep it for your closest friends or one-to-one communication, if you're sure it will be understood.

7. Don't bombard the group with photos. If you think something is really of interest, fine, but don't post 100 images, one after the other. Also, some parents don't want photos of their children to be featured on WhatsApp.

8. Don't use it for anything unrelated to the school. Jokes, charity support requests, viral videos... in the end the group can become a mess, with everyone posting anything they like. That is what social media is for, not WhatsApp.

9. Watch out for false information. With the best of intentions, sometimes fake news can proliferate on parent groups, such as photos of alleged paedophiles, 'news' about attempts to kidnap children outside schools, contagious illnesses, plagues of headlice etc. Be cautious. Innocent people can be stigmatised and stress can be caused. A parents' group on WhatsApp is not a form of the media nor is it a police station. Information is not checked and verified, and that is dangerous. Nor is it a doctor's surgery. If you have any doubts about something, whether it is a crime or a medical problem, always seek professional advice.

10. Never write if you're angry. If you have a problem with another parent or a teacher and you let off steam to the group, you may regret it later. It is always best to wait until you have calmed down. Never forget, if something is written down, there is always a record of it.

# Sport outside the classroom

**Children can take part in many different sports from an early age and learn better coordination and balance as well as having fun**

:: CARMEN ALCARAZ

Besides traditional school sports there are a multitude of activities nowadays to satisfy the tastes of children after classes are finished.

Rollerblading or skating is one of the trends that is popular everywhere. It helps to develop balance and maintain body harmony through movements and exercise.

Children can start to learn to skate at four. Classes, sometimes offered as extracurricular activities at schools, are usually divided into age groups, 4-6 years, 7-12 years and over 12s. It is a healthy exercise that increases muscle strength, develops concentration skills and physical resistance.

To make sure that children can skate safely, helmets, knee, wrist and elbow protectors should be worn. There should also be adequate supervision preferably by an adult instructor who will make sure that the children are skating in a safe, controlled environment.

Other forms of exercise that are gaining in popularity recently are pilates and yoga, both recommended to help children learn to relax, control their bodies and improve their overall well-being, physically and emotionally. These types of activities can be carried out with parents, a way to improve involvement and communication between them.

Pilates and yoga are recommended for children of all ages and all backgrounds and are an effective treatment for hyperactivity, attention deficit disorders, motor difficulties, bad posture, insecurity and sleep problems.

Although fencing is fairly unknown in Spain, more and more people are taking up this sport which works all the muscles and is not dangerous if certain precautions are taken.

Fencing is a skilled activity, which as well as developing coordination,



Yoga helps children relax and improves their overall well-being. :: FLICKR

improving reasoning skills and the ability to make quick decisions, also it teaches respect for the adversary and teaches and develops intellect.

Children of school age wanting to take up fencing should join an approved class which has a professional instructor to supervise and establish the guidelines.

## Family sport

A good way to make children more interested in sport and to strengthen emotional ties is to take part in physical activity as a family. This benefits not only the children but

also parents will find it allows them to continue keeping fit despite their reduced free time.

It is shown that when exercising in a group, people strengthen ties while increasing training time, so their performance is much better than if they exercise alone.

Some sports are perfect for practising as a family. One of them is swimming. Babies can remain with one parent to watch while the other swims. When the child is a little older they can be enrolled in beginners' classes while the parents both swim.

Cycling is another type of exer-

cise that can be done with children. Small children who can't reach the pedals yet can be carried in a special seat fitted to the bike. With older children more interesting cycling routes can be planned.

It also possible to go running and there are now special 'running buggies' to put a baby in. When children are still too young to run long distances it is best to adapt training to include short routes. In this way short runs followed by walking extends the exercise time and at the same time involves considerable physical activity.



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